

# Pfc. David T. To'omalatai laid to rest in California

*By Fili Sagapolutele  
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Army Pfc. David T. To'omalatai, 19, was laid to rest Tuesday at Green Hill Mortuary, in Palos Verdas, Calif., following a funeral service attended by military brass and Congressman Faleomavaega.

Flags were flown at half-staff at the California state Capitol in Sacramento Iraq.o, whom California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said "fought courageously so that others may enjoy the same liberties that Americans do every day."

Schwarzenegger said in a statement that To'omalatai's "brave sacrifice reminds all Californians to treasure the freedoms preserved by selfless soldiers like him."

"Maria and I offer our condolences to David's family and friends as they mourn their loss," Schwarzenegger said.

David's mother, Mrs. Sally To'omalatai said from Long Beach, Calif., yesterday said, "It was a very emotional service."

The soldier's medals were also presented during his funeral service that was held in Long Beach.

David, 19, died Jan. 27 of injuries he suffered when an

improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during convoy operations in Taji, Iraq. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

Mrs. To'omalatai said the

last time she saw her son was when David came home to say good-bye before deployment to Iraq in October last year. The last time she heard from him was an e-mail he sent two days before he was killed.

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*Pfc. David T. To'omalatai and his 10-month old son, Damien Benjamin Toomalatai, at their family home in Long Beach, Calif., in this undated photo from his sister, Maraea.*



# \* Pfc. David To'omalatai...

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"David told me in the e-mail - 'Don't worry mom. Everything is okay in Iraq'," said Mrs. To'omalatai crying. "He said to tell his dad that he is praying everyday in Iraq and he loves me very much. He also gave me an address in Iraq because I wanted to send him some stuff."

"He said he will see me soon and again not to worry," said Mrs. To'omalatai through tears.

It was early evening of Jan. 26 in California (the morning of Jan. 27 in Iraq) that David was killed and the family was informed.

"We were in shock," said David's mother.

His older sister, Maraia To'omalatai, 22, said her moth-

er is taking David's death very hard. Maraia is helping her mother trying to put David's belongings together, but she admits that it's been a very emotional task.

A New York Newsday Web site dedicated to fallen soldiers has various messages of condolences to the To'omalatai family from people all over the country, as well as Samoa and New Zealand.

Bringing it close to what all families of soldiers serving in Iraq must feel was a message written by the mother of one of David's friends in Iraq.

Wrote Cathy Davis of Columbus, Ohio, "To the To'omalatai Family: Our deep-

est, heartfelt condolences on the loss of David. My son, PFC Jeremy Davis, served with him in Iraq, at Camp Taji, and they became very close. Your family is in our hearts, prayers and thoughts each and every day. David is a true American hero and I thank you for the sacrifice that we make together in having our boys serve for the safety and comfort of the citizens of the United States."

David is the fourth of seven children born to Vailala and Sally Toomalatai. His parents are originally from Maututu and Lotofaga, but they now reside in Long Beach.

David has a 10-month old son named Damien.

